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THE BUFORA JOURNAL AND BULLETIN

Volume 2 Number 6

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EDITORIAL

"At this writing, UFO activity over the North American Continent has reached its lowest point since the Kenneth Arnold sighting in 1947."

— Robert J. Gribble : Editor, 'APRO REPORTER,' May 1968.

"Is there any other point to which you would wish to draw my attention?"

"To the curious incident of the dog in the night-time."

"The dog did nothing in the night-time."

"That was the curious incident"

— Sir Arthur Conan Doyle : 'MEMOIRS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES.'

What does this curious pause in UFO activity, which is world-wide and not confined to North America, portend?

Officialdom everywhere will no doubt be hoping that the ostrich policy of keeping heads firmly in the sand is at last paying off. I think that if this is so it is a vain hope. There have been such periods of quiescence before and they have invariably been followed by renewed activity on an increased scale.

Any attempt to assess the future development of UFO phenomena is, of course, complicated by the undoubted fact that there are at least two factions of UFO-denizens concerned in the aerial survey of our planet. On the basis of such hints as can be gleaned from a variety of sources, I judge that one of these factions is well disposed towards us and has probably been observing us, from behind the scenes, for a very long time. The other faction would appear to be comparative newcomers to our skies and manifests a tendency to further its ends without regard to our welfare.

Are these distinct and probably mutually hostile factions the 'SM' and 'LM' of the enigmatic Allende Letters?

If we are to accept the increasing number of testimonies to acts of UFO hostility which have been accumulating since 1962, it is a fair deduction that the newcomers are gaining a marked ascendancy over the rival faction. They are, at any rate, very much more assertive than in earlier years.

It seems to me that this poses a definite threat to our welfare. It is hard to account for the lack of direct contact between the UFO-denizens and ourselves, after two decades of intensive aerial activity in our environs, except on the assumption that it is due to the maintenance of a 'balance of power' between two rival groups of aliens. Clearly, if this balance is being upset — if the scales are tipping in favour of the newcomers — direct intervention by them in our affairs becomes increasingly probable.

One wonders whether the current pause in UFO activity is the calm before the storm. Is the trap about to be sprung?

I am inclined to doubt whether intervention, in this context, would be a matter of open landings, 'death rays' and all the lurid paraphernalia of H. G. Wells's, 'War of the Worlds.' One would rather anticipate an intensification of psychological warfare; increased pressure upon the minds of the masses in order to direct Humanity along predetermined paths.

I predicate the intensification of psychological warfare and not its inception, because I believe there is ample evidence that there has already been a great deal of subtle alien tampering with the collective psyche in recent years.

All that I have written above will be anathema to that section of UFO-researchers which continues to bumble along evaluating UFO reports in as negative and tendentious a fashion as possible, hoping vainly to resolve them all into mani-

festations of ball-lightning, balloons and what not. I can only say to these that our concern should be with the interpretation of the available evidence and should not be confined to attempts to discount the implications of that evidence in order to give aid and comfort to scientists and officials who will not see an inch in front of their noses.

It is to be hoped that the end of the current pause in UFO activity will not shatter the complacency of the sceptics in too violent a manner.

WAS THE H-BOMB DROPPED 10,000 YEARS AGO ?

Horror hit the Japanese city of Hiroshima in a split-second of nuclear explosion on August 6, 1945. The world shuddered at the incredible devastation caused by this new weapon the atom bomb.

But are nuclear weapons really new ? It is possible that, 10,000 years ago, an entire civilisation was wiped out in a dreadful nuclear war.

Students of the world's most ancient books, the collection of India's Sanskrit writings known as the 'mahabharata' have found astonishing reports which suggest that something very like the H-bomb was used thousands of years before the birth of Christ.

The 'mahabharata' are believed to have written in their present form more than 3,000 years ago, but they were based on much older works no longer in existence.

In these ancient pages are to be found descriptions of death and destruction which so closely resemble accounts of the havoc at Hiroshima that it seems nothing short of nuclear weapons could have been used.

One of them was called the "Brahma weapon".

Its effect upon an enemy army was described like this :

"When this weapon was discharged smoke like 10,000 suns blazed up in splendour . . . then a thick gloom suddenly encompassed the hosts. All points of the compass were suddenly enveloped in darkness. Clouds roared into the higher air, showering blood . . . the world, scorched by the heat of that weapon, seemed to be in a fever. Darkness hid the entire army. Then we beheld a wondrous sight : burned by the power of that weapon, the forms of the slain could not even be distinguished."

It is difficult to believe that this account, with so many frightening similarities to our own time, was written thousands of years ago.

Reporting another explosion, the 'mahabharata' said that for days afterwards there were terrible gales and peoples hair and fingernails dropped out.

"Food went bad and birds that had been contaminated turned white and their legs blistered and turned scarlet". — The effect created by radioactivity from modern bombs.

The ancient writings contain descriptions of another weapon known as "Kapilla's Glance" which could burn 50,000 men to ashes in a flash.

And there are reports that men had tampered with the "Divine Fire", so that the earth split and 60,000,000 people in great cities drowned in one terrible night.

One scribe said : "Then for several years after the sun and the stars and the sky were hidden by volcanic clouds and violent storms. It seemed that the end of the world had come"

The ancient writings are so factual in their descriptions that it is impossible not to wonder whether some incredibly advanced civilisation was blasted to nothing thousands of years ago.

Perhaps, after all, the H-bomb is nothing new.

D. Rodway

THE AUTUMN SKIES

The star-groups best seen in the Autumn, whilst containing many interesting features do not possess the first-magnitude stars which enrich the constellations I have described in the last three issues; nevertheless, among these groups are some of the larger and better known.

Assuming once more that we are observing between 10 and 11 p.m., this time early in November, south of the observer is to be found the Great Square of Pegasus which covers about fifteen degrees both of celestial latitude (declination) and longitude (right ascension). Alpha Pegasi (Markab) is the star at the south-west corner of the square, with Beta (Scheat) an irregular variable star above it marking the north-west corner; Gamma in the constellation — named Algenib is practically due south some fifteen degrees east of Markab. The last star of the square again almost due south but nearer to the point overhead, is common to the groups of Pegasus and Andromeda; this star is Alpha Andromedae — Alpheratz. Other stars stretching out towards the Eagle from Markab complete the constellation of Pegasus. A good way to make sure you are right in your identification is firstly to extend an imaginary line from Algenib to Scheat some two-and-a-half times when it will pass very close to Deneb in the Northern Cross; then do exactly the same from Algenib to Markab and this line almost points to Altair in the Eagle. Perhaps the main 'feature' of the Great Square is in fact that it contains nothing of any real interest — maybe excepting the occasional UFO!

In a line north-eastwards from Alpheratz stretches Andromeda; the first bright star one comes to — Mirach of the second magnitude — is the starting point for locating the Great Nebula; this nebula (M. 31) is to be found just beyond a faintish star a few degrees to the north-west of Mirach. Remember this will best be seen by looking slightly to one side and will appear as a 'hazy' star. Continuing our line from Alpheratz through Mirach Gamma Andromedae is found; in between these two lying a little to the east are seen the stars of the Triangle which though faint are quite easy to identify.

From the upper part of Andromeda to the point overhead lies Perseus, — a most difficult constellation to describe; however Mirphak — Alpha Persei — is found by prolonging the line from Alpheratz beyond Gamma Andromedae; from Mirphak a long line of stars curves down culminating in the Pleiades, an unmistakable cluster (actually forming part of Taurus). Beta Persei is a most intriguing member of the group; named Algol — the Demon — it lies between the 'long curve' and Andromeda and varies between magnitudes two and three-and-a-half due to its being an 'eclipsing binary' star, — that is to say it has a 'companion' star fainter than itself which passes in front of, and eclipses Algol at regular intervals.

Below Perseus and Andromeda, sprawling southwards over the celestial equator is a large but unstriking group known as Cetus, the Sea Monster; nevertheless it contains one of the most amazing stars in the sky appropriately named Mira, the wonderful one; this star varies over a period of roughly eleven months from an absolutely invisible magnitude nine to a maximum of three or even two, which involves something like a fifteen-hundredfold variation in brightness.

The remaining notable groups of the Autumn are Aquarius below and slightly to the west of Pegasus, its stars dropping down towards the southernmost first-magnitude star seen in northern latitudes, namely Fomalhaut in Piscis Australis, the Southern Fish.

Immediately underneath Pegasus' Great Square lies Pisces, the Fishes, an irregular pentagon of faint stars with others stretching away towards Cetus. Lastly we have Aries between Pegasus and the Pleiades.

In an earlier paragraph I coupled the term 'right ascension' with celestial longitude; this was not strictly accurate, as whilst longitude is measured in degrees right ascension is measured in hours, and the 'First Point of Aries', — the original point of the Vernal Equinox was the starting point for right ascension which denotes in hours the position of the Sun against the background of the zodiacal constellations; I write 'was', as the point of the Vernal Equinox is now to be found in Pisces just under Algenib. Aries, however, is still regarded as the first of the zodiacal constellations.

These constellations are, of course, twelve in number, comprising Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricornus, Aquarius and Pisces, and they are the star-groups the Sun uses as a backcloth in its annual celestial journey known as the ecliptic. Now to within about ten degrees, the Moon and all the planets (some groups of asteroids excepted) are in the same plane, and consequently their annual journeying is amongst these same star-groups, though they do not make an apparent annual 'round trip' as does the Sun.

All are naturally familiar with horoscopes, which purport to tell us what will happen as denoted by the relative positions of the Sun, Moon and planets to each other and to the zodiacal constellations, and more particularly individual detailed forecasts according to the position of the various celestial bodies at the time of one's birth. Astronomically speaking, it cannot be regarded as a possibility for the stars and planets to have any such influence on our lives, and it is always inadvisable to refer to any astronomer as an astrologer, — the result might well be similar to a stellar explosion! It is, however, interesting to speculate on the origin of astrological beliefs, and who knows? it may even be found one day that some such form of influence is exerted. After all the word Science — from the Latin *Scire*, to know — means the pursuit of knowledge, and to reject outright any chance, small though it may be of Astrology or similar subjects holding any truth whatsoever always seems to me to be the antithesis of a scientific approach.

Before I complete this quartet of sky-guides, I would like to mention one or two 'do's and don'ts' for sky watching; the first and obvious one being don't be impatient if the sky is clouded over — I have known nights which have started extremely cloudy to become absolutely crystal clear in the early morning, though completely clear skies are not all that frequent, and of course, even if the sky is completely clear, don't expect to see UFOs darting about all the time; patience is a very necessary virtue. Common errors to avoid in reporting UFOs include our comparatively new friends the satellites, though only about a dozen of these are visible to the naked eye and their times are reported in advance in a number of newspapers; remember though, that some of them do vary regularly in brightness as they rotate in orbit and present a different reflecting surface to the Sun. Other common mis-reports are aircraft lights, the brightest stars and planets, meteors and headlights on distant hilltops when the night is really dark.

One thing to really guard against is eyestrain, — do not look continuously at the sky for long periods as stars may well seem to start jumping around. It is for

this reason that personally I dislike the idea of sky-watching seated back to back facing north, south, east and west. Not only is one then watching the sky continuously, but even watching the same part of the sky. No! For the individual, I suggest that a maximum of five minutes without a break is ample, and even then one should be looking all round the sky and not at one particular part; give the eyes a change after five minutes are up and 'ground' them for a short while. You will find your night vision the more reliable if you do, and on a more mundane level it has the advantage of avoiding severe cricks in the neck!

Well I hope you have all enjoyed this series as much as I have enjoyed putting the articles together. Good sky-watching, good UFO spotting and a Happy Christmas.

Norman Oliver

Planetary Positions.

Mercury. Just before sunrise, first week in November.
Venus. Evening star, from September to December.
Mars. Leo & Virgo.
Jupiter. Virgo.
Saturn. Pisces.

Meteor Showers.

Taurids. End of October to mid-November.
Leonids. November 15th to 17th.
Geminids. December 10th to 13th.
Quadrantids. January 3rd and 4th.

THE FOUNDATION OF B.U.F.O.R.A.

On page 9 of the July issue of "Spacelink," in the course of an article entitled, "Tribute to Nigel Stephenson," Lionel Beer writes:

"I must emphasise that it was Nigel and he alone who initiated the inception of the British UFO Research Association."

This is not quite accurate. Nigel Stephenson was one of the founders of the London UFO Research Organisation, (LUFORO), and the sole founder of the British UFO Association, (BUFOA), the two parent bodies of the present BUFORA. It was, however, I who framed the proposals which resulted in the amalgamation of LUFORO and BUFOA to form BUFORA and it was I who wrote the Constitution for the new Body. Nigel Stephenson, then Chairman of BUFORA, states as much himself in his Annual Report for 1965, a copy of which lies before me as I write.

I am making the above observations in order to keep the record straight and not with any intention of disparaging Mr. Stephenson or seeking to minimize his role as one of the major pioneers of UFO-research in this Country. I have, on the contrary, the highest admiration for his early work in this field and I wish him every success and good fortune in the future.

J. C-B.

DID PENNINGTON BUILD THE 1897 U.S.A. AIRSHIP ?

Speculation as to the origin of the 'Airship' reported over the central States of the U.S.A. in 1897 has resulted in many theories and at least one of these attributes the sightings to the activities of a peculiar antique sort of U.F.O. I understand that the reason that the craft looked very much like the current airship design already flying in Europe is that the U.F.O. denizens wished to present their ship to the natives in a manner that would be acceptable and understandable. However the airship in question did not seem to be at all anxious to present itself, operating as it did almost exclusively by night and skulking during daylight hours in out of the way places.

Before accepting such 'way out' theories it would seem necessary to exclude any possibility of the machine being the production of some far-sighted inventor with the ability, wealth and resources to build and fly such a machine and also to keep the whole project secret.

Witnesses of the airship were often men of excellent reputation for veracity and often crowds of onlookers were able to compare experiences.

The descriptions tallied to a remarkable degree. It seems clear also that some of the sightings of night flying objects were of quite a different category and to present day ufologists may be recognised as being the result of 'normal' U.F.O. activity.

From the reports still in existence it is possible to build up a very good idea of the type of dirigible involved and there is no doubt that in many respects it was similar to airships already built and flying in Europe particularly in France. In 1884 Renard and Krebs devised and built an electrically propelled airship called 'La France' which made a circular flight of five miles at its first appearance.

It would indeed have been strange if there had been no parallel activities in the U.S.A. at that time. Resources of material and money were there in abundance and among the fertile brains of a rapidly growing scientifically orientated community was there no person of sufficient genius engineering ability and wealth to take up the aerial challenge ?

I believe there was and I believe that his name was Edward J. Pennington.

Pennington was born in Franklin, Indiana in 1858 and as a boy showed remarkable engineering aptitude and as he developed into manhood he displayed remarkable initiative, charm and persuasiveness. With these attributes it was not long before he was running his own factory and at the age of twenty-three had patented a reciprocating head for planing machines the first of a continuous stream of patents which flowed from his active brain until his death in 1911.

He was ruthless too and could exhibit considerable showmanship in order to further his own ideas. A characteristic of Pennington which in this context is significant was the secrecy he achieved to protect his projects and his habit of quietly dropping one idea in favour of another with little regard to the financial outcome.

By 1885 Pennington had acquired sufficient capital to set up the Standard Machine Works in Defiance Ohio and two years later he created two further firms to make pulleys and wood-working machinery. A flood of Pennington Patents were registered at this time at Fort Wayne.

There were rumours of a company capitalised at one million dollars in Oswego, Kansas and another at Cincinnati with factories to produce 'Freight Elevators'. (Could this phrase possibly have been a euphemism for load-carrying Airships ?)

After a brief appearance at Edinburg, Illinois, where he collected some 50,000 dollars from the inhabitants for yet another 'pulley works' he came to rest at Mount Carmel, Illinois in 1890.

Now things begin to develop this new Company was actually entitled 'The Mount Carmel Aerial Navigation Company' and fresh patents included a four cylinder radial engine "for the propulsion of an aerial vessel". He also let it be known, that he was "readying a vessel to fly from Mount Carmel to New York".

In 1891 he exhibited a captive airship some thirty feet long and six feet in diameter. It flew in a circle propelled by an airscrew turned electrically. The current was conveyed by wires in the tethering cable.

In 1893 he turned his attention to motor driven vehicles and again a spate of patents flooded from the Pennington brain. Soon he was making motor-cycles in Cleveland, Ohio and here he invented the first balloon tyre.

Such giddy progress was bound to meet with reverses and due to his dogmatic attitude and ruthless decisions he began to make enemies: yet his uncanny instinct for avoiding trouble kept him from falling foul of the law.

During 1894 he joined Thomas Kane who made kerosene engines widely used in dairies for milk separation. This event is most important in this thesis which will be evident later. Here, in Racine on the shores of lake Michigan they financed a really large concern for the development of petrol engines.

They patented among other things an 'electric igniter' for petrol driven engines which was really the first sparking plug, in 1895. In this year Pennington visited England and took some of his vehicles with him.

Exercising his well-known assurance and charm he persuaded Henry J. Lawson a successful manufacturer of bicycles to purchase patents to the tune of half a million dollars. He was still here in 1896 and entered the Brighton Run. After an altercation with Mons. Leon Bollée his claim to have won the event was not disputed. After this he commuted frequently between England and America so that he could very well have participated in the aerial demonstrations in the U.S.A. late in 1896 and during 1897.

In December 1895 he had deposed with the American Patents Office the design for full sized Airship. Many of the features of this design are so close to those described by witnesses of the aerial ship seen in 1896 and 1897 that on this evidence alone one would suspect that Pennington could have been responsible.

Basing the scale of the design on the size of the passenger seats the overall length of the ship would be about 140 ft. The keel beneath which provided accommodation for the crew and passengers also housed large batteries and extended for 70 ft. with an equal amount of overhang of the envelope at each end. At the front end of the envelope a large airscrew about 50 ft. from tip to tip provided traction. At the rear an ample rudder and a horizontal fin allowed control of direction.

At the sides two horizontally disposed propellers furnished lateral 'trimming'. Along the top of the ship a high dorsal fin would help to prevent sideways drift and yawing at slow speeds. Altogether a very impressive aeronautical design for that period of time.

It is probable that the finished airship based on this plan would deviate in minor details. Perhaps laterally placed aircrews were found to give a better lift and control if suitably shaped.

Wings or large ailerons above the envelope would also help to provide lift if suitably angled. In 1895 during his motorcycle phase Pennington was heard to remark: "Suppose I have a cycle, screw driven, making a mile a minute . . . just suppose that . . . then suppose that I put aeroplanes on that machine . . . and they are under good control, what then?"

What then indeed, the Wright Brothers would have been forestalled by several years.

The sighting of the Airship on the ground in 1897 by Capt. Hooton at 6 p.m. on about 20th April is usually regarded as a true account of his experience which he recounted in the Little Rock, Arkansas, Gazette. He was, he said, out hunting near Homan when he heard the sound of 'pumping' like the noise of a Westinghouse locomotive brake.

Going in the direction of the sound he was amazed to behold "the famous airship" in an open space. A man wearing dark glasses was doing something at the rear of the ship. As he approached four other men appeared.

During the ensuing conversation there was no doubt in his mind that the crew were American. When the ship was ready, three large 'wheels' started to rotate on either side of the airship and with a hissing sound she took off. The 'aeroplanes' on top of the envelope sprang forwards and the ship rapidly gained height and speed.

(For a more detailed account of this sighting please refer to the JULY/AUG. 1966 issue of 'The Flying Saucer Review').

The 'pumping noise' is of great significance. This noise is noted in at least three of the sightings. Twice it was referred to as being similar to that made by a milk separator. This is almost conclusive, it was Thomas Kane whom Pennington joined in 1894 who made the motors for these separators.

All witnesses agree that there were lights aboard in abundance with one very bright searchlight which was seen to dim as the airship accelerated.

One witness encountering the aeronaut grounded claims to have asked why he turned the light on and off so much. He replied, no doubt truthfully that it consumed a great deal of motive power. We are led to the conclusion that Pennington's ship was propelled by a petrol-electric, or diesel-electric system. A bank of large batteries would be charged by a motor driven dynamo and would then operate electric motors geared to the airscrew(s). This system was widely used for the propulsion of road vehicles in the early years of this century.

After a trip of some miles it might be necessary to land to recharge batteries. Such a propulsion system would be well within Pennington's capabilities at this time.

The crew referred to by some witnesses included a woman, and it was customary for Pennington to take his wife on most of his exploits. (He married three times but I cannot find record of any children). Also a bearded man.

I have a photograph of Pennington with one of his vehicles and here he is accompanied by a man with a beard. Pennington himself was tall and of good physique. He usually sported a rather long dark moustache.

The next evidence required towards proving that the ship was not only terrestrial but Pennington's is to plot the course of the airship from recorded sightings during the 'voyages' of 1897 and to show that its speed was within the capabilities of such an early craft and that it operated in the vicinity of Pennington workshops.

Here I suggest the reader obtains a good large scale map of the central States of America. Those included in the Encyclopaedia Britannica of 1911 are most useful being nearly contemporary.

Two series of sightings occurred in 1897.

Expedition One. Starting from Pennington's base at Oswego, Kansas, to Belleville, Kansas, to arrive March 25th, thence to Sioux City some 200 miles northwards travelling at night. Making around 40 mph and in fair weather the six or so hours of darkness would allow easy arrival by 28th March. Here the ship landed and charged batteries?

Turning southwards an easy night run of 100 miles allowed late worshippers leaving church at Omaha, Nebraska to view the aerial visitor. Continuing via Lincoln and Beatrice on the southerly run arrival at Everest, Kansas on April 1st., another 100 miles apart. In fact Kansas City was reached quite early at 8.15.

Back to base at Oswego without serious mishap on about the 3rd. April. ? .

After this there are three possibilities. a) Pennington flew to Racine on lake Michigan by April 9th keeping to out-of-the-way landing sites b) The ship was partly dismantled and carried by rail in Pennington's closed rail cars to Racine. c) That Thomas Kane had another similar airship at Racine. I would suggest (b) as being the most probable in the circumstances. Pennington had the resources and the experience in moving large objects by rail from place to place, vide his captive airship which was shown at exhibitions at Chicago and elsewhere.

Expedition Two. The Airship would have taken the air on the evening of April 9th. 1897 and leaving Racine some 60 miles from Chicago was seen first north of the city and then to south-east at 9.30 p.m. passing over the lake.

Turning westwards the ship would have reached vicinity of Eldon in Iowa some 200 miles after five hours at around forty m.p.h. Spending the day of 10th on ground at some secluded spot the batteries would again be charged and ready for the take-off on evening of April 10th. Then passing over Eldon westwards to Ottumwa (10 miles) at 7.25 and 7.40 p.m. respectively the ship is seen near Albia 25 miles further on at about 8.10 p.m. This chain of sightings allows some estimation of the airship's speed, — 35 miles in 45 minutes which is better than 45 m.p. Wind speed must be taken into account but from the sighting reports the weather during this period seems to have been remarkably calm.

Steering now towards the north-west apparently en route for Racine the ship would have passed near Mount Carroll but the date given for the airship over this city is April 9th. One must conclude that if this date is correct that the craft passed near this city on the westward leg of its journey before turning south-east towards Eldon. This is perfectly possible on the time schedule estimated.

However, and here one must speculate on Pennington's movements, it is not certain how the airship arrived at its next point at Yates Center, Kansas on April 19th. It could well have travelled at night over the next week or so southwards which would be well within its 40 m.p.h. capabilities. Or, it may have returned to Racine and have been once more despatched by rail.

At Yates Center there was the unfortunate incident of a young heifer becoming entangled in the mooring rope on take-off. Then south-east and a fairly long haul 400 miles to near Texarkana, but at 40 m.p.h. only ten hours of darkness were necessary. Here the ship was obliged to land on April 21st. to recharge batteries. In the evening when all was ready for take-off the airship was spotted by one Capt. J. Hooton whose detailed report is well known.

Airborne again and travelling in a leisurely manner Hot Springs, Arkansas was reached on May 6th. Once more the ship landed and was encountered by the Law Officers, Constable Sumpter and Deputy Sherriff Mc.Lemore. Both these gentlemen have sworn affidavits to their evidence in which they tell of a bearded mechanic and of a young woman. There was also a young man who was engaged in filling a water bag. They were informed that the ship was en route for Nashville, Tennessee. This may well have been so, but I feel that it was not long before it was once again safely at Oswego, Kansas with Pennington highly satisfied with his aerial exploits. There is little evidence of its re-appearance.

From the foregoing evidence it must be conceded that the itinerary followed by the 1897 airship was not particularly miraculous even for a craft of that period, only it took place in America where hitherto no such aerial exploits had been seen. No wonder then, that the onlookers became scared and confused, suspecting a work of the Devil. The only Devil responsible was in my opinion one eccentric, brilliant inventor named Edward Joel Pennington.

Of course there are so many questions left unanswered. For instance why did Pennington decide to drop the whole project just when fame and fortune might seem to have been within his grasp? I would suggest that he was clever enough to realise that his airship, though a very remarkable invention had very severe limitations which could not readily be overcome.

There would be little prospect of increasing the battery capacity without making the ship larger and unwieldy. It was obviously very much a fine weather craft and he had been extraordinarily lucky to have had such a long spell of fine, calm weather for his trials.

Also he would have realised that until the internal combustion engine could be improved considerably in size and reliability the whole airship project had better be shelved. The new and more financially rewarding field of the motor car must have seemed to Pennington to offer much better prospects of immediate financial rewards. He must also have known that there were aeronautical designers in Europe who had forged ahead in the airship field with whom he could hardly compete.

In the Motor Museum at Beaulieu, Hampshire there is a very rare vehicle. It is an 1896 Pennington motor-tricycle. It is worth looking at closely. The twin-cylinder, water cooled engine functions by fuel injection and the ignition system is remarkably ingenious, operating an early form of spark plug on each cylinder. The wheels have wire spokes and are furnished with wide tyres of modern cross section. It is a really remarkable piece of advanced engineering for its time and marks its designer Pennington as a brilliant engineer of foresight and genius.

Geoffrey G. Doel.
September 1968.

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THE MYSTERIOUS MEN IN BLACK

Britain is an Island and it is perhaps some insular quirk of thought which has led many of our native UFO-researchers to overlook or discount a phenomenon which has obtruded itself in connection with UFO manifestations in many countries, including Australia and New Zealand, Canada, India, Germany, Belgium, the United States and Britain itself. I refer to the suppressive activities of the MIB, the so-called "Men in Black," whose debut on the UFO scene came in 1953 with the silencing of Al Bender — if, indeed, they did not have a part in the Maury Island affair of 1947.

Few experienced UFO-researchers can be entirely unaware of some obstructive influence at work behind the scenes in the UFO field, a force making for obscurantism and tending towards the maintenance of public ignorance concerning everything pertaining to the UFOs. Major Keyhoe dubbed this force the "Silence Group" and located it within the Pentagon. Following his lead, researchers in general have blackguarded the Authorities, civil and military, in and out of season, as the villains of the piece where suppression of UFO information is concerned. Of recent years, however, it has become increasingly obvious that, far from being omniscient in the matter, the Powers-That-Be and their scientific cohorts are as puzzled and confused by UFO activity as any of the rest of us.

Let it at once be admitted that not all published information on MIB activities ought to be accepted as reliable. A few persons in the United States have unquestionably welcomed an opportunity to boost profits by jazzing-up their publications with lurid tales. Furthermore, by its very nature the MIB mystery lends itself to unconscious exploitation by paranoid personalities with delusions of persecution.

When, however, the lies are exposed and the lunacies dismissed, their remains a corpus of veridical narratives of UFO witnesses visited or telephoned in their homes and dissuaded by threats from publicising their experiences. The silencers are not always three in number, as in the Bender case, or invariably clothed in black. A Pentagon spokesman confirmed recently that some of them wear uniforms and carry forged military or other official credentials. It must also be noted that phenomena of poltergeist type sometimes afflict those who have seen what, apparently, they were not meant to see. No less a UFO personality than Kenneth Arnold experienced this nuisance in his home, after his famous sighting of June 1947 which inaugurated the "UFO Era."

Two dangers confront us at this point. The first is that of dismissing the whole business of the MIB out-of-hand as melodramatic nonsense, a course which will no doubt commend itself too readily to many would-be scientific analysts of the UFO phenomenon. To these I can only point out that it is sound scientific practice to weigh carefully all the evidence relating to a given matter, irrespective of how strange some of it may be.

The second danger is that of reading too much into the MIB manifestations. There is no valid reason whatsoever why these should be permitted to stampede us into headlong retreat from UFO-research, with minds fear-clouded by pseudo-religious or occult fantasies. In this field as in life generally, we have nothing to fear more than Fear itself.

There is accumulating evidence that several factions of UFO-denizens, pursuing conflicting aims, are active within our terrestrial environs. I suggest that MIB visitations can best be interpreted as attempts on the part of one alien group to prevent vital tidbits of information reaching another alien group. It is clear that extreme measures would not generally be taken against awkward witnesses for fear of attracting undue attention and that, generally speaking, the most satisfactory way of ensuring a witness's silence would be by the application of just such intimidation as the MIB are widely reported to employ.

J. C-B.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor,
BUFORA JOURNAL.

Dear Sir,

The article by John A. Keel in the Summer Journal is a masterpiece of the "cloak and dagger" technique.

The writer seeks to make our flesh creep but from the beginning to end he fails to offer any scrap of evidence or proof in support of his contentions. Here are a few of the questions which occur to me —

1. If the 'silent contactees' are too scared to breathe a word, how does Mr. Keel know that there are thousands of them?
2. If Mr. Keel has seen the 'artefacts' which these contactees are said to have been given, can he give us any idea of what form they take and of their evidential value?
3. If, after their period of usefulness is ended, some contactees have been caused to lose all conscious memory of their experiences, how did Mr. Keel track them down? How does he know they have been contacted?
4. Mr. Keel first says 'A number of very well-known UFO researchers have been silent contactees for years and have cautiously sprinkled genuine clues in their books and articles but have never dared to reveal the whole story' (this sounds like James Mosely or Gray Barker!). Further on he says 'You have been told the truth many times in many books and publications but you have rejected it.' What books, what publications? If these writers could tell the truth, why is it that the thousands of 'silent contactees' cannot give even a clue?

If Mr. Keel wishes us to take his farrago of conspiratorial innuendos seriously, he would do well to offer a few tangible facts. We might get somewhere then.

Yours truly,

Eric Biddle.

Ludlow, Salop.
30th. August, 1968.

Mr. Keel may sometimes be guilty of journalistic ebullience. Available evidence suggests that he is seldom very far off the mark where basic facts are concerned.

— Editor.

The Editor,
BUFORA JOURNAL.

Dear Sir,

In BUFORA JOURNAL Vol. 2, No. 5, on page 13, C. C. Stevens of Brentwood challenges me to name books, authors and publishers alluded to by the late Wilbert B. Smith 'of Ottawa in the speech a transcript of which I sent to the Editor. Our Editor adds as a footnote that he would like the answers to Mr. Stevens's questions, himself.

By way of reply, I urge their attention to page 9 of Vol. 2, No. 5 of our JOURNAL, lines 7 and 8 from the bottom of the page, in John A. Keel's article. There are astonishing similarities between Keel's references to books and periodicals and the late W. B. Smith's.

Perhaps Mr. Stevens and all others who are similarly puzzled might get together with John Keel? No doubt the late Wilbert B. Smith's family, former colleagues and executors could assist also. His former employers, the Canadian Government, ought to but will not.

De facto, I admit no case to answer. I have merely reproduced Smith's claims. They are not my own. I cannot be held responsible for Smith's testimony.

Yours, etc.

Wilfred Daniels.

Stafford, Staffs.

5th. September, 1968.

I fail to see Mr. Daniel's point concerning Wilbert Smith and John A. Keel. Mr. Keel's views on UFOs are diametrically opposed to those Smith held.

It seems quite clear that Mr. Daniels tends to share Smith's expressed opinions on UFOs and it now transpires that he does so on faith and not on evidence — as is, of course, his privilege.

— Editor.

Newchapel Observatory,
Stoke-on Trent,
Staffs.

3rd October, 1968

Dear Mr. Cleary-Baker,

In the Autumn 1967 Journal, Vol. 2., No. 2., you devoted half of page 18 to an "advert" describing a series of 21 colour photographs taken by a private Uruguayan observatory called "Antares", which, according to "Le Maine Libre" were being offered for sale at U.S.\$ 16.00.

From another source namely the translation of an article appearing in the "El Dia" La Plata newspaper, the same photographs were described as being offered for sale for U.S.\$ 16,000.00. — a bit of a difference. At the time I wondered whether in translation noughts had been added in error, or alternatively omitted. I wrote to the observatory in June this year, and again at the beginning of September. At last I received a reply, copy of which I have pleasure in enclosing. As you can see the price has been reduced considerably (and the number of photographs) but is still outrageously high, especially when considering that prints are offered for sale and not the original negatives!

At the bottom of the letter was attached a small piece of 35 mm. colour film, described separately in Uruguayan. The film shows a blue sky, with clouds and a bright light behind them — the sun? In one of the darker clouds appears four minute points of blue light which may be the U.F.O.

The fact that the photographs are described as bright and clear, and in colour, and that we are assured that "we won't be disappointed" makes them more intriguing than ever, and perhaps more desirable.

I would be interested to know if you have any suggestions, that might help in obtaining these prints, and would like to hear from any other members who may have written after the photographs.

Yours sincerely,

Anthony R. Pace.

The British U.F.O. Research Association does not express or hold corporate opinions on UFO phenomena. The Editor and his contributors are solely responsible for views advanced over their names in this 'JOURNAL.'

BOOK REVIEWS

"Warnings from Flying Friends" by Arthur Shuttlewood

Published by Portway Press,
17, Portway,
Warminster,
Wilts.
Price : 26/-

This is in many ways a remarkable book.

In part, it is a continuation of the author's former book, "The Warminster Mystery," in that it brings up to date the story of the continuing UFO phenomena centred upon the pretty little Wiltshire town of Warminster. As a record of on-the-spot observations it is invaluable to students.

Following upon the heels of the aerial phenomena, there seem to have been strange happenings on the ground in the locality. This is the less surprising in that it confirms the testimony of American UFO investigator John A. Keel, who maintains that intense activity by UFO-denizens is now in progress at ground level.

What are we to make of Arthur Shuttlewood's encounter, (on his own doorstep), with "Karne of Aenstria?" Of the weird contact story told by two Warminster residents whose identities will be readily guessed by frequenters of Cradle Hill in the last few years? I can only say that I am convinced, on the basis of personal experience, that Arthur and his associates are not given to deceit and are animated by a burning sincerity in all that pertains to the quest of the elusive UFO.

The not inconsiderable portion of the book which treats of UFO manifestations in their more general aspects, will unquestionably afford critics, especially scientific critics, much scope for adverse comment. The overall impression to be derived from the heterogeneous collection of theories and testimonies which Arthur cites, is that the end of the World is imminent, or at anyrate that we are moving into a New Age which will be preceded by some very unpleasant happenings.

It may be so. Doomsday has been "on the cards" since Hiroshima. My own reaction to all this apocalyptic speculation is that, if true, there is nothing to be done about it. I say, with Socrates: "Face death with a good courage and believe this as a truth, that no evil can happen to a good man, either in life or after death." May it not be, however, that what is coming is not a physical catastrophe but a Ragnarok of the human spirit, provoked by the insidious materialism which is today undermining the very foundations of civilised existence?

Chapter Thirteen of the book is, (appropriately), a disaster. I would strongly advise Arthur to omit or rewrite it in any future edition. There is nothing more wearisome than manipulation of Bible texts and juggling with numbers derived therefrom, with the object of arriving at predetermined conclusions. This is an Old English pastime which has been in vogue since the days of Cromwell.

To sum up, "Warnings from Flying Friends" is not without faults and embodies a certain amount of material which is redundant or of questionable value. My feeling is, however, that a reader who is not afraid of a little detritus may well emerge with a handful of gold nuggets.

Warminster is, as I have often stressed, a "Ufocal" of major importance. I do not think that students can afford to ignore this book, or any book, written about and around the phenomena which occur there with such persistence.

There is certainly some elusive attraction about Cradle Hill, which is, with Colloway Clump, the pivot of UFO activity in the Warminster area. On the Hill in the small hours, under a canopy of stars blazing in an inky velvet sky, it is easy

to credit even the wilder stories which have found their way into the legend of the "Thing." When, however, unreliable and exaggerated narratives are discounted, there remains a hard core of unassailable fact which establishes Warminster as perhaps the most important centre of UFO activity in these Islands.

UFO buffs who make a habit of sniping at Arthur Shuttlewood and his associates Bob Strong and Sybil Champion, would do well to reflect that without the sustained watchfulness of these ardent skywatchers, many manifestations in the skies of Warminster would have gone unrecorded.

J. C-B.

"The Allende Letters"

"New UFO Breakthrough" by Brad Steiger & Joan Whritenour.

Published by Universal-Tandem Publishing Co. Ltd.,
33, Beauchamp Place, London, S.W.3.

Price : 3/6 each

The first of these is a Tandem Special and contains, as well as the Steiger-Whritenour contributions on various aspects of the UFO enigma, essays by a number of prominent American researchers, including Jerome Clark, Ray Palmer and Dr. Frank Stranges. It is excellent value for money and contains many photographs of high quality.

"New UFO Breakthrough" is a Steiger and Whritenour review of a number of "way out" hypotheses purporting to throw light on the problems posed by the UFOs. The Allende Letters are dealt with, also the Inner Earth hypothesis, the Silencing of Dr. Wilhelm Reich and many more intriguing topics. The authors are completely impartial in their presentation of the matters raised. Perhaps a trifle too impartial, in that newcomers to the UFO subject may regret the absence of what I may describe as any sort of "probability index" to assist them in picking their way among the views cited.

I heartily recommend both publications to readers. UFO-research cannot but benefit by the discussion of even the most exotic possibilities. It is worth sifting a mountain of error to find a grain of truth.

J. C-B.

"Flying Saucer Report" by Roger Stanway & Anthony Pace.

Published by Newchapel Observatory,
Stoke-on-Trent,
Staffordshire.

Price : 15/-

This is primarily a report on a series of UFO sightings in the Stoke-on-Trent area in 1967. The authors seem to have spared no effort to uncover the facts behind the reports and their findings can hardly be ignored by anyone prepared to approach the subject of UFOs with an open mind.

There is no doubt that newcomers to the field of UFO-research will derive a great deal of helpful information from this book. Old hands may peruse it with profit also, if only for the purpose of brushing up on half-forgotten basic data.

A useful reference section is devoted to quotations by famous men, scientists and politicians, on the subject of UFOs. There are also some interesting Ministry of Defence statistics on UFO reports.

The kind of book to keep around the house and hand to those infuriating visitors who sniff at the mention of UFO-research and assert that all who pursue it are cranks and crackpots.

J. C-B.

NOTES & QUOTES

NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT!

"Taking the most pessimistic possibility, the extinction of man, we can still assume that within a few tens of millions of years some new intelligent species would evolve."

— 'Intelligence in the Universe,' by R. A. MacGowan & F. I. Ordway.

VULCAN REDISCOVERED.

An Italian amateur astronomer claims to have discovered a new planet between Mercury and the Sun. I have collected about sixty observations by 19th.-Century astronomers of unknown black bodies transiting the solar disc. It is virtually certain that Leverrier's planet 'Vulcan' has no real existence, so one assumes some of the observations may, as the late M. K. Jessup maintained, be sightings of UFOs.

KLASS DISMISSED!

"The behaviour of UFOs, their shapes and other physical properties, are quite different from what we know of ball lightning."

— Dr. F. Zigel : Assistant Professor of Astronomy at Moscow Aviation Institute.

HOW TO INVESTIGATE UFOs.

A member of the staff of the Condon team investigating UFOs at the University of Colorado was recently arrested, together with his wife, after being found in possession of a quantity of marijuana and peyote buttons.

Perhaps we shall get a lively report from the team after all; Dr. R. J. Low described the work of the drug-possessing member as having been "very satisfactory." The member in question was one of the investigators sent to look into the death of the horse Snippy, which some persons maintained died as a result of UFO activity.

CONTRIBUTORS STILL NEEDED.

I shall be glad to receive contributions for the JOURNAL, the supply having fallen off again of late. Contributors are requested to type on one side of the paper only. Contributions — also letters requiring a reply — should be accompanied by a stamped, addressed envelope.

J. C-B.

BUFORA INFORMATION OFFICER . . . Change of address.

From Jan. 1st 1969 Mr. Richard Farrow's address will be :—
95 Winner Street, Paignton, South Devonshire.
(until that date please phone : 10 - 904 - 3586)

O B I T U A R Y

BUFORA JOURNAL regrets very much to learn of the untimely death of the noted Brazilian UFO-researcher Olavo T. Fontes, M.D.

Dr. Fontes was well known for the meticulous enquiries he undertook into many celebrated UFO incidents, including the 'Almirante Saldanha' sighting in the South Atlantic in 1958.

We extend our condolences to Dr. Fontes' wife and family.

J. C-B.

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Alan Massam, Evening Standard.

I believe you have made a substantial contribution to the UFO literature by documenting these events."

Professor James E. McDonald, Institute of Atmospheric Physics,
University of Arizona, U.S.A.

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J. Cleary-Baker, Ph.D. Editor of BUFORA JOURNAL.

"An excellent Flying Saucer Report."

L. J. Lorenzen, Director of A.P.R.O.

"All those in the department who read the Report were very impressed by the amount of time, effort and enthusiasm put into the project."

L. W. Akhurst, Chief Co-ordinator of UFO Reports at the
Ministry of Defence, Whitehall, London.

"An excellent publication."

Charles Bowen, Editor of FLYING SAUCER REVIEW.

Over 100 complimentary copies of the Report have already been sent to interested parties both in Great Britain and abroad, but if you would like to purchase a copy yourself, please write to the following address as soon as possible as only a limited number are available :—

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